

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Withdrawn) A method for removing leukocytes comprising passing a leukocyte-containing liquid through a leukocyte removal filter comprising nonwoven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 0.3 to 3.0  $\mu\text{m}$  to remove leukocytes from the leukocyte-containing liquid and to obtain a leukocyte-free liquid, the nonwoven fabric having a formation index  $y$  of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm.
2. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30.
3. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein  $y$  satisfies the following inequality:
$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$
4. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric is obtained by using a melt-blown method.
5. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte removal filter comprises at least one of a filter for removing aggregate upstream of the nonwoven fabric and a post-filter downstream of the nonwoven fabric.

6. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is a flat filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

7. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is a cylindrical filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

8. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 6, wherein a container of the leukocyte removal filter is formed of a flexible resin.

9. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the leukocyte-containing liquid comprises whole blood, red cell concentrate, platelet concentrate, platelet rich plasma, or platelet poor plasma to pass through the leukocyte removal filter.

10. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising passing the leukocyte-containing liquid through the leukocyte removal filter by utilizing head drop.

11. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising passing the leukocyte-containing liquid through the leukocyte removal filter by at least one of increasing pressure of an inlet side of the leukocyte removal filter and reducing pressure of an outlet side of the leukocyte removal filter.

12. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising: performing extracorporeal circulation by continuously collecting whole blood from a body of a

patient, passing the collected whole blood through the leukocyte removal filter, and returning the leukocyte-free whole blood to the body of the patient.

13-24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A leukocyte removal filter ~~for a leukocyte removal method~~ for removing leukocytes from a leukocyte-containing liquid, comprising: nonwoven fabric having an average fiber diameter of 0.3 to 3.0  $\mu\text{m}$  and a formation index  $y$  of 50 or less corresponding to a thickness of 0.3 mm.

26. (Original) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30.

27. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein  $y$  satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

28. (Currently Amended) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric comprises melt-blown fibers ~~is obtained by using a melt-blown method~~.

29. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising at least one of a filter for removing aggregate upstream of the nonwoven fabric and a post-filter downstream of the nonwoven fabric.

30. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising a flat filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

31. (Previously Presented) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, comprising a cylindrical filter having an inlet and an outlet for liquid.

32. (Currently Amended) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 30, wherein a container of the flat filter is formed of a flexible resin.

33. (Currently Amended) The leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25, wherein the leukocyte removal filter is ~~constructed to remove~~ removes leukocytes from a leukocyte-containing liquid comprising whole blood, red cell concentrate, platelet concentrate, platelet rich plasma, or platelet poor plasma.

34. (Withdrawn) A blood extracorporeal circulation device for blood, comprising at least the leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25.

35. (Withdrawn) A blood extracorporeal circulation device for blood, comprising at least the leukocyte removal filter according to claim 25; an inlet for introducing whole blood collected from a body of a patient into the leukocyte removal filter; and an outlet for returning the leukocyte-free whole blood to the body of the patient.

36. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven fabric is further obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

37. (Withdrawn) The method for removing leukocytes according to claim 1, comprising passing the leukocyte-containing liquid through the leukocyte removal filter by utilizing head drop or by increasing pressure of the inlet side of the leukocyte removal filter and/or reducing pressure of the outlet side of the leukocyte removal filter; and

wherein the nonwoven fabric is further obtained by a melt-blown method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$

38. (Currently Amended) The leukocyte removal filter of claim 25, wherein the nonwoven fabric ~~is obtained by a~~ comprises melt-blown fibers, method and has a filling rate of 0.05 to 0.30 and satisfies the following inequality:

$$y < -4 \times \text{average fiber diameter of nonwoven fabric } (\mu\text{m}) + 55.$$